

Paramount -- Working to educate and inform the community, Congresswoman Linda Sánchez (CA-39) hosted an immigration forum in cooperation with KMEX-34 Univision, and the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund (NALEO) at Progress Park in Paramount.

“Currently, there are a number of immigration bills and proposals being discussed in Congress. I hosted this forum to provide the most up-to-date information and answer questions on reforming our immigration system,” said Congresswoman Linda Sánchez.

Sánchez invited immigration attorney Victor Nieblas and immigration expert Angelica Salas to participate. Nieblas currently serves as a Director on the Board of Governors for the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) and hosts his own immigration radio show on KTNQ. Salas is the Executive Director of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA). Jorge Miramontes of KMEX-34 moderated the panel discussion, and Los Angeles District Director of the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS), Jane Arellano, shared information about the services the local BCIS office.

During the forum, Sánchez and the experts discussed:

The Democratic Immigration Principles - These reform principles would create a path for hard working, tax-paying immigrants, as well as students, who have resided in the U.S. to adjust their status. This reform would also enhance the temporary worker program to match willing workers with willing employers without undermining American jobs, wages and worker protections of U.S. citizens.

President Bush’s Immigration Proposal - The President’s proposal creates no new path to legal permanent residency or citizenship. Bush says temporary legal workers in his program may apply for citizenship through the current process. Bush’s guestworker proposal would deport immigrants after 3 years. No specific legislation has been introduced on his proposal.

Hagel-Daschle Bill- This bill would create programs for those who undergo criminal and national security background checks to help track and identify immigrants living within and entering U.S. borders for work. In addition this legislation would help reduce the backlog of applications for family-sponsored visas.

The Dream Act/Student Adjustment Act- This bill would allow certain immigrant students to adjust their status to legal permanent resident status. This form of earned legalization for students would help expand educational opportunities to students who have been in the United States for at least five years.

After the various reform ideas were presented and discussed, members of the audience were able to participate in a question and answer segment with the panelists. Panelists offered their individual advice and perspectives on audience questions.

“It is important for Congress to provide legislation that addresses the strengths and weaknesses of our current immigration system. As the only Latina on the Judiciary Committee and subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Claims, I look forward to playing an active role in the immigration reform debate. I assure you that I am fighting for just immigration policies to build a better America,” concluded Sánchez.